Chapter 16

Two Concepts of Resistance: Foucault and Deleuze

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In a letter Deleuze addressed to Foucault in 1977, shortly after the publication of the first volume on *The History of Sexuality* (and which has since been published under the title "Desire and Pleasure"), Deleuze laid out several distinctions between his own philosophical trajectory and Foucault's, one of which concerns, precisely, the status of Foucault's concept of *resistance*. "It seems to me that Michel confronts a problem that does not have the same status for me," Deleuze wrote.

> If *dispositifs* of power are in some way constitutive [for Foucault], there can only be phenomena of "resistance" against them, and the question bears on the status of these phenomena . . . For myself, the status of phenomena of resistance is not a problem; since lines of flight are primary determinations, since [it is] desire [– and not power – that] assembles the social field . . . if the first given of a society is that everything takes flight, then everything in it is deterritorialized.[1]

A Thousand Plateaus (which was published in 1981, four years after Deleuze penned his letter) contains a now well-known footnote where Deleuze and Guattari elaborate these claims:

> Our only points of disagreement with Foucault are the following: (1) to us the [social] assemblages seem fundamentally to be assemblages not of power, but of desire (desire is always assembled), and power seems to be a stratified dimension of the assemblage; (2) the diagram and abstract machine have lines of flight that are primary, which are not phenomena of resistance of counterattack in an assemblage, but cutting edges of creation and deterritorialization.[2]

What I would like to do in this chapter is examine Deleuze's critique of the concept of resistance. The point is not to choose one thinker over another, but to provide a kind of necessary *conceptual* analysis. If the task of philosophy is to create concepts, as Deleuze says; and if concepts divide up and distribute our world in different ways, then the differences in concepts can have certain ramifications – even if, as in the case of Deleuze and Foucault, they are dealing with similar problems. But in the end, I would, nonetheless, like to revive an aspect of Deleuze's thought that has not been, unfortunately, one of his lingering legacies – even though, for a certain period of time, it is the aspect of his thought that was most well-known: namely, the theory of desire.

The Place of "Resistance" in Foucault's Trajectory

The first thing I would like to do is to follow the trajectory of Foucault's thought to see why he was led to develop a concept of "resistance" in the first place. Foucault's thought is often divided into three periods, or three axes: (1) his early work on discourse and the conditions of knowledge (*Madness and Civilization*, *The Birth of the Clinic*, *The Order of Things*, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*); (2) a middle period, in the 1970s, on the mechanisms of power (*Discipline and Punish*, *History of Sexuality, Volume 1*); and (3) his final work on ethics or modes of "subjectivation" (*History of Sexuality, Volumes 2 and 3*). The concept of resistance arises at a specific moment in this trajectory – at the end of the period on power – and there is a precise reason why Foucault was led to develop a concept of resistance at this point. Indeed, Foucault was precipitated from one period to another by certain problems that arose in the domain he was then considering – they are, as it were, fault lines or cracks in his thought, sending it off in new and different directions.

Foucault's first period concerned, in part, the role of discourse in knowledge, and the relation of discursive formations to what Deleuze would call "fields of visibility." We find in Foucault's work, for instance, an analysis of the discourse of madness or mental illness (in *Madness and Civilization*), which finds its "field of visibility" (at a historically determinate moment) in the asylum, as a place where the mad are "made visible." Similarly, we find in *Discipline and Punish* an analysis of the discourse of delinquency and criminality, as well as an analysis of the prison as its field of visibility. These two fields – the field of discourse and the field of visibility – are not the same, and have complex relations. The discourse of penal law, for instance, which defines which actions are criminal or illegal, is not the same as the discourse surrounding the prison, which deals with the question of how to manage the prisoners incarcerated there. Hence the first problem (or set of problems) that arose in Foucault's work: how, Foucault was asked, did he account for the relation between discourses and their corresponding fields of visibility – and even more to the point, how could he account for the discontinuity between historical *epis-*

temes? (One of Foucault's aims – notably in *The Order of Things* – was to show that "knowledge" has had various epistemic formations: from the Renaissance (sixteenth century) through the Classical Age (mid-seventeenth century through the end of the eighteenth century) to the Modern Age (nineteenth century through at least the mid-twentieth century).)

Foucault found an answer to these problems in the concept of power relations: every form of knowledge (as both a field of discourse and a field of visibility) is itself an integration of power relations, which Foucault defined as a capacity to affect and to be affected – or what he elsewhere termed "governmentality," which precedes the formation of any given government. In his middle works, Foucault wound up isolating and analyzing two primary forms of governmentality: "disciplinary power" or "anatomo-politics," which is exerted on individual bodies, and "bio-power," which is exerted on large populations. Power relations themselves are never given or known – knowledge is still presented in terms of the two fields of discourse and visibility – but it is the exercise of power relations that makes knowledge possible, and it is their shifting relations that accounts for the discontinuities between formations of knowledge.

It was at the end of his considerations of the question of power that the problem of *resistance* arose – this is the second profound fault line in Foucault's thought. If power is ubiquitous, if it covers the entire social field, if it is these power relations that provoke and condition our forms of knowledge, then is it possible to alter these power relations themselves, to change them, to combat them – in short, to *resist* them? In a sense, this is the question that obsessed Foucault in his final works, and that provoked his shift – which occurred between the first and second volumes of the *History of Sexuality* – away from questions of power to questions of ethics and processes of subjectivation.

This then, is our initial question: what exactly is the status of *resistance* in these later works of Foucault? It is true that Foucault will say that resistance is "primary" in relation to power relations, since it entails a relation with the outside.[3] In this sense, one could perhaps speak of a progressive "deepening" in Foucault's work as it develops: power relations condition the forms of knowledge, but resistance is primary in relation to power. Yet the idea that "resistance is primary in relation to power" is easier to say than to conceptualize, and no one was more aware of this than Foucault himself. The eight years that separate the first two volumes of the *History of Sexuality* (1976–84) testify to this, and to the profundity of the problem that Foucault was grappling with.

In his great essay "The Lives of Infamous Men," Foucault had written that "the most intense point of a life, the point where its energy is concentrated, is where it comes up against power, struggles with it, attempts to use its forces and to evade its traps."[4] Indeed, the book for which this essay was intended to serve as an introduction was to be what Foucault called an "anthology of existences,"

that is, a documentation of the existence of people, in the past, whose lives would have disappeared into total obscurity had they not had a single run-in with the mechanisms of power, and left a tiny trace in an archive somewhere: petty criminals, inconsequential usurers, scandalous monks. For instance, in the archives of the hospital in Charenton, France, Foucault finds a short entry concerning one Mathurin Milan, admitted to the hospital on 31 August 1707, accused of madness. The entry reads:

> His madness was always to hide from his family, to lead an obscure life in the country, to have actions at law, to lend usuriously and without security, to lead his feeble mind down unknown paths, and to believe himself capable of the greatest employments.[5]

One can see why Foucault's eye would have been attracted to this entry, which he found in the archives of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (where Foucault spent a good percentage of his adult life). Mr. Milan seems to have led a not unordinary life: he lived alone and avoided his family, though he also engaged in suspicious money-lending and legal practices. Yet Mr. Milan was admitted to the Charenton hospital as "mad" for these very reasons – one of many obscure and "infamous" lives that was "reduced to ashes in the few sentences that struck them down." Indeed, as Foucault comments, one of the questions provoked by reading Milan's entry in the Charenton hospital archives concerned "the reason why people were so zealous to prevent the feebleminded from walking down unknown paths."[6]

"The Lives of Infamous Men" was published in January 1977, not long after the publication of the first volume of the *History of Sexuality*, and the intended anthology was to have included the cases of Pierre Rivière ("having slaughtered my mother, my sister, and my brother . . .") and Herculine Barbin ("being the recently discovered memoirs of a nineteenth-century French Hermaphrodite"). One can see how cases like those of Mathurin Milan pose the problem of resistance in an acute manner. As subjects, we are determined as much by forms of knowledge – for instance, by the categories and roles by which we are classified and identified (you are a man, or a woman, or a homosexual, or a teacher, or a student . . .) – as by the strategies of power that are constantly exerted upon us – ordering our time, distributing our space, making us develop our powers and capacities (such as our labor power) in determinate ways (such as the maximization of labor capacity in Fordism). How does someone like Milan resist these exercises of power? Foucault early on gave up on the idea that our "experience" had an independent existence prior to the exertion of power upon it. Power relations are ubiquitous, and are immanent to experience itself. The idea that power is imposed upon our experience from without is precisely the old conception of power that Foucault strove to contest throughout his writings.

It is thus from *within* the context of power relations that resistance must arise. But here is where we can see two conceptions of resistance in Foucault: a *reactive* and an *active* type of resistance (borrowing these terms from Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche). The very concept seems to imply a reactive conception: resistance would seem to be defined as a reaction or as a response to a given exercise of power. We all know the paradigmatic case: the person in grade school who reacts to every command to sit down and sit up, to form a straight line, to stop talking in class, to raise your hand when you need to go to the toilet. Such a person resists power, everywhere and always, constantly testing its limits. And such a conception is repeated on a larger scale, socially and politically. As a mere reaction to power, however, resistance is quickly reappropriated and restratified, and the "knots of power" quickly reform around it.[7] Foucault's question then became: what is an *active* conception of resistance (which is simply another way of answering the question of how resistance is primary in relation to power)?

The answer to this question came in Foucault's final works: power becomes active when it is directed, not against another exercise of power, but against itself. Resistance becomes active in the relation to oneself, the ability each of us has to affect oneself, the affect of the self by itself. In affecting myself, I open up the possibility of creating myself in a way that differs from the present forms of knowledge, and the present constraints of power. In reading Foucault's biographies, and his last interviews, it seems clear that this active conception of resistance was developed, or at least confirmed, by Foucault's experiences in California, where he went to teach at Berkeley. In San Francisco, he discovered a gay community that had little parallel in Paris, and which had been created, not by a wholesale frontal reaction against a homophobic culture, but rather step by step, on the basis of individuals exerting power on themselves, affecting themselves, constituting themselves as gay, and then linking up, slowly but surely, into a group or community that, by the time Foucault arrived, had a significant political presence and political power. In this sense, Foucault's philosophy recapitulated the three questions of Kant's philosophy: (1) What can I *know*? (What can I see and articulate within any given historical *episteme*?); (2) What can I *do*? (What power may I claim and what resistances may I counter?); and most importantly (3) What can I *be*? (How can I produce myself as a subject? How can I *be* otherwise? How can I '*think* otherwise'?) The answer to the latter question is given, in part, by the capacity of power or force to affect itself.

From Foucault to Deleuze

The ambiguities of Foucault's position here, however, have often been noted. Most often, Foucault's later turn toward ethics, or modes of subjectivation (ways I can affect myself, ways I can produce myself as a subject) has been interpreted in merely aesthetic and private terms: I can treat myself or my life as a work of art, something to

be fashioned creatively, but that creation is ultimately a kind of private endeavor, far removed from political realities. This is how Richard Rorty tended to read Foucault's later work, though the example of the gay community in San Francisco shows that "affecting oneself" is far more than an aesthetic enterprise. More importantly, Foucault's work on ethics or "modes of subjectivation" touches on a profound point that allows us to link up Foucault's work with Deleuze's. In *The Use of Pleasure*, Foucault says that the affect of the self by itself presumes a determination of an "ethical substance" that is to be affected – whether it is pleasure, desire, the flesh, one's feelings, and so forth. He summarized the ethical conduct of various periods in some familiar slogans. For the Greeks, it was "Know yourself!" following the Socratic dictum. For the Romans, it was "Master yourself!" where the ethical substance to be affected was the passions, which needed to be mastered and harmonized. For the Christians, it was "Deny yourself!" and what needed to be denied were the cravings of the flesh, and their concupiscence. For us moderns, the slogan has become "Express yourself!", that is, express the feelings and desire that constitute you – that constitute what you really *are*. Foucault's whole conception of ethics implies a determination of the ethical substance that is to be affected.

In his book on Foucault, Deleuze himself poses a question that, in retrospect, has an enormous resonance. "Is the affect of self by self pleasure," he asks, "or desire?"[8] This question refers to a minor dispute between Foucault and Deleuze that nonetheless has important implications for the question at hand, namely, the status of "resistance" in the two thinkers. In Deleuze's 1977 open letter to Foucault, "Desire and Pleasure," with which we began, Deleuze recounts that Foucault once said to him:

> I cannot bear the word desire; even if you use it differently, I cannot keep myself from thinking or living that desire = lack, or that desire is repressed. Michel added, whereas myself, what I call pleasure is perhaps what you call desire; but in any case, I need another word than *desire*.
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> Obviously, once again, this is more than a question of words. Because for my part, I can scarcely tolerate the word *pleasure*. But why? For me, desire implies no lack; neither is it a natural given. It is an *agencement* [*assemblage*] of heterogeneous elements that function . . . I cannot give any positive value to pleasure because pleasure seems to me to interrupt the immanent process of desire; pleasure seems to me to be on the side of strata and organization . . . Pleasure seems to me to be the only means for a person or a subject to "find itself again" in a process that surpasses it.[9]

These comments seem to reveal that, at the end of his career, in the midst of his reflections on resistance, Foucault was led to a point that suddenly seemed to find itself linked up, in complicated and sometimes obscure ways, with Deleuze's earlier

work on desire. Deleuze seemed to have a premonition of these linkages: "Could I think of equivalences of this type," he asked himself, "what for me is the body without organs corresponds to what for Michel is body-pleasures? Can I relate the 'body–flesh' distinction, of which Michel spoke to me, to the 'body without organs–organization distinction?"[10] Yet although Deleuze raises these questions, he admits that he does not know how to answer them. "I do not know how to situate myself," he confesses, "in relation to Michel's present research."[11]

If Deleuze was unable to situate his own work in relation to Foucault in 1977, the intervening years have perhaps given us a more perspicacious perspective. Why does the concept of resistance, which arises in Foucault's work for determinable reasons, find no precise equivalent in Deleuze? Why does Deleuze appeal to a concept of desire rather than power/resistance (or even pleasure)? To attempt to answer these questions, we must look at *Anti-Oedipus*, which Deleuze co-authored with Félix Guattari and published in 1972. *Anti-Oedipus*, I would argue, goes back to two fundamental thinkers as its precursors. On the manifest surface, these two thinkers would seem to be Freud and Marx. Both Freud and Marx insisted, in their own ways, that our conscious thought is determined by forces that go beyond consciousness – forces that are, as we say, "unconscious" (though we are far too used to this word; it would be better to formulate a new one). Put crudely, in Marx, our thought is determined by our class ("class consciousness"); in Freud, we are determined by our unconscious desires (stemming, usually, from familial conflicts). The nature of the relationship between these two unconsciousnesses – the "political economy" of Marx and the "libidinal economy" of Freud – was a question that numerous thinkers tried to answer. For a long time, the relation between the two economies had been formulated in terms of the mechanisms of "introjection" and "projection": as an individual, I introject the interests of my class, my culture, my social milieu, which eventually come to determine my consciousness (my "false" consciousness); at the same time, the political economy was seen as a projection of the individual desires of the population that produced it. In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari famously reject these mechanisms: they argue that political economy (Marx) and libidinal economy (Freud) are *one and the same thing*. We have perhaps heard this thesis too many times to comprehend its truly revolutionary nature, and this is perhaps because the two fundamental precursors of *Anti-Oedipus* are not Freud and Marx, despite appearances, but rather Nietzsche and Kant. Understanding their role as precursors will help us see more clearly the relation between Foucault and Deleuze on the question of resistance.

Nietzsche on Libidinal and Political Economy

Let me turn first to Nietzsche. There are two aspects of his thought that are relevant here: his theory of the drives (a libidinal economy), and his theory concerning the genealogy of morality (a political economy). As an example of what

Nietzsche means by a drive, consider this brief discussion of the drives from Nietzsche's early book, *Daybreak*:

> Suppose we were in the market place one day and we noticed someone laughing at us as we went by: this event will signify this or that to us according to whether this or that drive happens at that moment to be at its height in us – and it will be a quite different event according to the kind of person we are. One person will absorb it like a drop of rain, another will shake it from him like an insect, another will try to pick a quarrel, another will examine his clothing to see if there is anything about it that might give rise to laughter, another will be led to reflect on the nature of laughter as such, another will be glad to have involuntarily augmented the amount of cheerfulness and sunshine in the world – and in each case, a drive has gratified itself, whether it be the drive to annoyance, or to combativeness or to reflection or to benevolence. This drive seized the event as its prey. Why precisely this one? Because, thirsty and hungry, it was lying in wait.[12]

This is the source of Nietzsche's doctrine of *perspectivism* ("there are no facts, only interpretations"), but what is often overlooked is that, for Nietzsche, it is our *drives* that interpret the world, that are perspectival – and not our egos or our conscious opinions. All of us, as individuals, contain within ourselves such a vast confusion of conflicting drives that we are, as Nietzsche liked to say, multiplicities, and not unities. It is not so much that I have a different perspective on the world than you; it is rather that each of us has multiple perspectives on the world because of the multiplicity of our drives – drives that are often contradictory among themselves. *Within ourselves*, Nietzsche insists, we can at the same time be egoistic or altruistic, hard-hearted or magnanimous, just or unfair, can cause pain or give pleasure. Moreover, our drives are in a constant struggle or combat with each other: my drive to smoke and get my nicotine rush is in combat with (but also coexistent with) my drive to quit. This is also where Nietzsche first developed his concept of the *will to power* – at the level of the drives. "Every drive is a kind of lust to rule," he writes, "each one has its perspective that it would like to compel all the other drives to accept as a norm."[13]

We can try to combat the drives, of course, and struggle against them – indeed, this is one of the most common themes in philosophy: the fight against the passions. In another passage from *Daybreak*, Nietzsche says that he can see only about six fundamental methods we have at our disposal for combating a drive. For instance, we can avoid opportunities for its gratification (no longer hiding packs of cigarettes at home); or we can implant regularity into the drive (having one cigarette every four hours so as to at least avoid smoking in between); or we can engender disgust with the drive, giving ourselves over to its wild and unrestrained

gratification (smoking non-stop for a week) to the point where we become disgusted with it. But then Nietzsche asks: *who* exactly is combating the drives in these various ways? His answer:

> [The fact] *that* one *desires* to combat the vehemence of a drive at all, however, does not stand within our own power; nor does the choice of any particular method; nor does the success or failure of this method. What is clearly the case is that in this entire procedure our intellect is only the blind instrument of *another* drive which is a *rival* of the drive whose vehemence is tormenting us . . . While "we" believe we are complaining about the vehemence of a drive, at bottom it is one drive *which is complaining about the other*; that is to say: for us to become aware that we are suffering from the *vehemence* [or *violence*] of a drive presupposes the existence of another equally vehement or even more vehement drive, and that a *struggle* is in prospect in which our intellect is going to have to take sides.[14]

Instinctively, Nietzsche says, we take our *predominant* drive and for the moment turn it into the *whole* ego, placing all our weaker drives perspectivally *farther away*, as if those other drives weren't *me* but rather an *it* (this is the origin of Freud's idea of the *id*, which simply means the "it"). When smokers continually say they are trying to stop smoking, it simply means that their conscious intellect is taking sides with a particular drive: the drive to quit, rather than the drive to light up, which nonetheless remains stronger than the former. When we talk about the "I," we are simply indicating which drive, at the moment, is strongest and sovereign: the feeling of the "I" is the strongest wherever the preponderance lies, even though it can flicker from drive to drive. What we call thinking, willing, and feeling are all "merely a relation of the drives to each other."[15] But the drives remain largely unknown to the conscious intellect. Nietzsche concludes:

> However far a man may go in self-knowledge, nothing can be more incomplete than his image of the totality of *drives* which constitute his being. He can scarcely name the cruder ones: their number and strength, their ebb and flood, their play and counterplay among one another – and above all the laws of their *nutriment* – remain unknown to him.[16]

In other words, there is no struggle of reason against the drives; what we call "reason" is nothing more than a certain "system of relations between various passions," a certain ordering of the drives.[17] In the *Gay Science*, Nietzsche considers the familiar example we have of becoming more reasonable as we grow older. "Something that you formerly loved as a truth or probability strikes you as an error," Nietzsche surmises, so you cast it off "and fancy that it represents a victory

for your reason." But it is less a victory for reason than a shift in the relations among the drives. He continues:

> Perhaps this error was as necessary for you then, when you were a different person – you are always a different person – as are all your present "truths" . . . What killed that opinion for you was your new life [that is, a new drive] and not your reason: *you no longer need it*, and now it collapses and unreason crawls out of it into the light like a worm. When we criticize something, this is no arbitrary and impersonal event; it is, at least very often, evidence of vital energies in us that are growing and shedding a skin. We negate and must negate because something in us wants to live and affirm – something that we perhaps do not know or see as yet.[18]

Nietzsche's entire critique of traditional metaphysics – his critique of logic, of the categories, of the ego, of religion – is undertaken from the perspective of the libidinal economy of drives.

But this is where the question of morality (political economy) comes in for Nietzsche. Drives differ from instincts – instincts are predetermined (hawks fly, lions hunt, beavers build dams), whereas drives are not. Humans, says Nietzsche, are undifferentiated animals. Since the drives are not completely determined, one of the functions of morality is to establish an "order of rank" among the drives or impulses. "Wherever we encounter a morality, we also encounter valuations and an order of rank of human impulses . . . Now one and now another human impulse and state held first place and was ennobled because it was esteemed so highly."[19] Consider any list of impulses – they are almost immediately categorized as virtues and vices: industriousness is a virtue, sloth is a vice; obedience is a virtue, defiance and insubordination are vices; chastity is virtuous, promiscuity a vice; these days, not smoking is a virtue, smoking is a vice. When Nietzsche inquires into the *genealogy* of morality, he is inquiring into the *conditions* of any particular moral ranking of the impulses: why certain impulses are selected *for* and certain impulses are selected *against*.

Nietzsche argues that the *value* inherent in most moral rankings is what he calls the "herd instinct." The drives that were selected *for* were those that served the needs of the community, the furtherance of the "species': impulses that were "unegoistic," drives toward self-abnegation, self-sacrifice, etc. Selflessness is a virtue, selfishness a vice. More generally, Nietzsche would argue that herd morality is an instinct *against Life*. But there is no distinction between nature and artifice here: it is not as if we could simply remove the mechanisms of morality and culture and allow the drives to exist in a "free" and "unbound" state. There is no "natural" or "spontaneous" state of the drives, except as an Idea. The impulse toward the herd, toward the community, is itself a drive, in competition with the other drives: we

never leave the domain of the drives. Kant liked to say that we can never get beyond our representations; Nietzsche surmises that what we can never get beyond is the reality of the drives.[20] But in fact, the drives and impulses are always *assembled* or *arranged* in different ways, in different individuals, in different cultures, in different eras, in different moralities – which is why Nietzsche always insisted that there is a plurality of moralities, and what he found lacking in his time was an adequate *comparative* study of moralities.

Now Deleuze, it seems to me, takes up this Nietzschean schema, *mutatis mutandis*. On the one hand, what he calls "desire" is nothing other than the state of the impulses and drives: "Drives are simply the desiring-machines themselves."[21] On the other hand, like Nietzsche, Deleuze insists that the drives never exist in a free and unbound state, nor are they ever merely individual; they are always arranged and assembled, not only by moral systems, but more generally by every social formation. The social formations analyzed in *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* – "primitives," States, capitalism, war machines – are a typology of different ways in which the drives and affects can be assembled. Deleuze and Guattari note that the schema of *Anti-Oedipus* was partly inspired by Pierre Klossowski's books *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle* and *Living Currency*. "In his recent works, Klossowski indicates to us the only means of bypassing the sterile parallelism where we flounder between Freud and Marx by discovering . . . *how affects or drives form part of the infrastructure itself*."[22] Although the claim that there is no difference in nature between libidinal and political economy has complex practical consequences, it is fairly straightforward theoretically, and two distinctions may help clarify Deleuze and Guattari's thesis.

The first is the distinction between desire and interest. A well-known school of economics sees human beings as rational agents who seek to maximize their interest. Someone who wants to become a professor, for instance, could pursue that interest by applying to a university, taking courses, writing a thesis and attending conferences, in the hope of ultimately securing an academic position. Such an interest can be pursued in a highly rational manner. But that interest, and the means to pursue it, only exists within the context of a particular social formation. If someone decides to pursue that interest in a concerted and rational manner, it is because their desire – their drives and affects – is already invested in the social formation that makes that interest possible. For this reason, Deleuze insists that desire is always *positive*. Normally, we tend to think of desire in terms of *lack*: if we desire something, it is because we lack it. But Deleuze reconfigures the concept of desire: what we desire – what our drives and affects are invested in – is a social formation. Lack appears only at the level of interest, and in multiple ways: one may have an interest in obtaining an academic position one does not have (a first lack), only to discover that a competitive job market makes it impossible to obtain that position (a second lack). Marketing and advertising are aimed at the manipulation of interest: I reach for a favored brand of toothpaste because I have now an interest in white teeth and fresh breath. This is why Deleuze

and Guattari argue that the fundamental problem of political philosophy is one that was formulated most clearly by Spinoza: "Why do people fight for their servitude as stubbornly as though it were their salvation?"[23] The answer: because your desire is never your own. Desire is not a psychic reality, nor is it strictly individual; rather, your drives and affects are from the start part of the social infrastructure.

The distinction between interest and desire, in turn, parallels the distinction between the rational and the irrational, though Deleuze rarely uses these terms. "Once interests have been defined within the confines of a society, what is rational is the way in which people pursue those interests and attempt to realize them," such as the interest for a job or white teeth. "But underneath that," Deleuze explains:

> you find desires, investments of desire that are not to be confused with investments of interest, and on which interests depend for their determination and very distribution: an enormous flow, all kinds of libidinal-unconscious flows that constitute the delirium of the society.[24]

Every society is thus a distribution of the rational and the irrational, but the rational is always the rationality of something irrational:

> Reason is always a region carved out of the irrational. It is not sheltered from the rational, but is a region traversed by the irrational and is simply defined by a certain relationship between irrational factors. Beneath all reason there is delirium and drift. Everything about capitalism is rational, except capital . . . A stock market is a perfectly rational mechanism, you can understand it and learn how it works; capitalists certainly know how to use it; yet it's completely delirious, it's crazy . . . It's just like theology: everything about it is perfectly rational if you accept sin, the immaculate conception, and the incarnation . . .[25]

Deleuze's Inversion of Kant's Theory of Desire

Why then do Deleuze and Guattari present *Anti-Oedipus* as a theory of desire rather than a theory of drives? Here again, on the manifest surface, the obvious response is that *Anti-Oedipus* constitutes a critique of psychoanalysis, and thus is necessarily indexed on the theory of "unconscious" desire found in both Freud and Lacan. At a certain level, *Anti-Oedipus* presents itself as a theory of the "real," in Lacanian terms, but the real is analyzed in purely positive terms, and not as a lack, an impossibility, or a gap in the symbolic, as in Lacan.[26] It is no doubt not by chance that, after the appearance of *Anti-Oedipus*, Lacan's own work turned increasingly toward the theory of the drives.[27] Yet in the end, the theory of desire found in *Anti-Oedipus* is indexed less on Freud or Lacan than on Kant, and particularly Kant's

second critique, the *Critique of Practical Reason*. One might surmise (correctly) that Deleuze has little sympathy with the second critique, with its appeal to a transcendent moral law and the categorical imperative (which Deleuze will replace with immanence and a "problematic" imperative). But if Deleuze and Guattari explicitly model *Anti-Oedipus* on the *Critique of Pure Reason*, it is because Kant presents the second critique in its entirety as a theory of desire. We must therefore analyze the way in which Deleuze and Guattari take up and modify Kant's concept of desire in *Anti-Oedipus*.

Kant argued that there are three fundamental faculties of the mind: the faculty of *knowledge*, the faculty of *desire*, and the *feeling of pleasure and displeasure* (third critique).[28] These definitions are derived from the nature of our representations: every representation we have can be related to something other than itself – that is, both to an *object* and to the *subject*. In the faculty of knowledge (first critique), a representation is related to an *object*, from the viewpoint of its *agreement* or *conformity* with it (theory of reference, or denotation). In the faculty of the feeling of pleasure and pain (third critique), the representation is related to the *subject*, insofar as the representation affects the subject by intensifying or weakening its vital force (Deleuze will develop this idea in his concepts of affectivity and intensity). Finally, in the faculty of desire (second critique), the representation is likewise related to an object, but in this case it enters into a *causal* relationship with its object. Kant's definition of the faculty of desire is extraordinary: it is "a faculty which by means of its representations is the cause of the actuality of the objects of those representations."[29] On the surface, the definition sounds like magic: if I have a representation in my mind, the faculty of desire is capable of producing the object that corresponds to it.

Readers of Kant, however, know why he defines the faculty of desire in causal terms: the problem of *freedom* concerns the operation by which a free being can be said to be the cause of an action. I have a representation in my mind of the killing of my enemy, and the faculty of desire carries out that action in the world. In acting freely, the agent produces something that is not reducible to the causal determinism of mechanism. "Practical reason," Kant writes, "does not have to do with objects for the sake of *knowing* them but with its own ability to *make them real*."[30] Kant was aware, of course, that real *objects* can be produced only by an external causality and external mechanisms; yet this knowledge does not prevent us from believing in the intrinsic power of desire to create its own object, if only in an unreal, hallucinatory, or delirious form. In what Kant calls the "pathological" productions of desire, what is produced by desire is merely a *psychic reality*.[31] Nonetheless, Kant brought about a Copernican Revolution in practical philosophy to which Deleuze is strongly indebted, and explicitly so: desire is no longer defined in terms of *lack* (I desire something because I do not have it), but rather in terms of *production* (I produce the object because I desire it). The fundamental thesis of *Anti-Oedipus* is a stronger variant of Kant's claim. "If desire produces," Deleuze and Guattari write, "its product

is real. If desire is productive, it can be productive only in the real world and can produce only reality."[32] How does Deleuze come to justify this extraordinary claim, which seems even more extraordinary than Kant's?

For Kant, the essential question concerns the *higher form* that each faculty is capable of (a form which is no longer merely "pathological"). A faculty has a higher form when it finds *within itself* the law of its own exercise, and thus is said to function *autonomously*. The higher form of desire, for Kant, is what he calls the "will." *The will is the same thing as desire*, but raised to its higher form. Desire becomes will when it is determined by the representation of a pure form – namely, the moral law, which is the pure form of a universal legislation (the categorical imperative). Practical reason "has to do with a will which is a causality inasmuch as *reason* contains its determining ground."[33] For Kant, it is only under such conditions that we can be said to be acting freely. For Deleuze, however, it is significant that, in Kant, the moral law requires the intervention of the three great transcendent Ideas as its postulates. "Freedom," as the "fact" of morality, implies the cosmological Idea of a supra-sensible world, independent of any sensible condition. In turn, the abyss that separates the noumenal Law and the phenomenal world requires the intermediary of an intelligible author of sensible Nature or a "moral cause of the world," that is, the theological Idea of a supreme being, or God. This abyss, finally, can only be bridged through the "postulate" of an infinite progress, which requires the psychological Idea of the immortality of the soul. In other words, having denounced the transcendent Ideas of Soul, World, and God in the first Critique, Kant resurrects each of them, one by one, in the second Critique, and gives them a practical determination.

Deleuze, of course, rejects this appeal to transcendence on Kant's part, and in effect he asks: would it be possible to develop a theory of desire that did not appeal to the moral law and the transcendent Ideas that serve as its postulate (which turn desire into a "will"), but instead synthesized desire with a conception of Ideas that are purely immanent? This is precisely what takes place in the opening two chapters of *Anti-Oedipus*: the three syntheses by which Deleuze and Guattari define "desiring-machines" (conjunction, connection, disjunction) are in fact the three same Ideas that Kant defines as the postulates of practical reason – Self, World, and God – but now stripped entirely of their transcendent status, to the point where neither God, World, nor Self subsists. *Anti-Oedipus* is thus an attempt to rewrite the transcendent theory of desire developed in the *Critique of Practical Reason* from a purely immanent viewpoint. But what does it mean to speak of a purely *immanent* theory of desire?

In Kant, God is the master of the disjunctive syllogism: he creates the world by parceling out predicates according to the either/or disjunction: you can be man *or* woman, black *or* white, but not both. Deleuze turns this into a diabolical "disjunctive synthesis," in which both sides of every disjunctive are affirmed at once: man *and* woman, black *and* white. In Kant, the Idea of the World is derived from the

hypothetical syllogism "if . . . then," a causal chain which, when extended to infinity, gives the Idea of the World, the Universe, the totality of all that is. Deleuze turns this into a connective synthesis, an "and . . . and" that is open-ended, rhizomatic, never totalizable, and produces a *chaosmos* rather than a World. In Kant, finally, the Self is derived from the categorical syllogism, a substance that lies behind all our representations. Deleuze turns this into an immanent conjunctive synthesis, which produces a kind of counter-self, a schizophrenic self, defined merely by a series of intensive states. In sum: "The Grand Canyon of the world, the 'crack' of the self, and the dismembering of God."[34] Deleuze gives a purely *immanent* characterization of the three syntheses that Kant defines in transcendent terms: connection (the dissolution of the Self), conjunction (the destruction of the World), and disjunction (the death of God). Desire (the relations between the drives and affects) is constituted by tracing out series and trajectories following these immanent syntheses within a given social assemblage. *Anti-Oedipus* is the *Critique of Practical Reason* turned on its head: an immanent theory of desire that refuses to synthesize desire with the transcendent Ideas that would turn it into the "will" (in the Kantian sense).

From Resistance to Capture

Anti-Oedipus, then, is a kind of amalgam of Nietzsche and Kant: Kant's theory of desire rendered immanent under a Nietzschean inspiration. Deleuze does not flag these links; indeed, Deleuze was so imbued with the history of philosophy that he naturally seemed to be following the thought of the great philosophers, always pushing them to their differential and immanent limit, freeing them from the great terminal points of traditional metaphysics, God, the World, and the Self. But this sketch of Deleuze's theory of desire is enough to make clear why the question of resistance does not arise in Deleuze's philosophy. If resistance becomes a question in Foucault, it is because he begins with the question of knowledge (what is articulable and what is visible), finds the conditions of knowledge in power, but then has to ask about the ways one can resist power, even if resistance is primary in relation to power. It is Foucault's starting point in constituted knowledges that leads him to pose the problem of resistance. One finds a comparable trajectory, to a certain extent, in Lacan, or at least certain Lacanians: if one begins with the Symbolic, one is led to seek the gaps or ruptures in the Symbolic that are produced by the Real. One could say that the status of the Real in Lacan is analogous to the status of resistance in Lacan.

Deleuze's ontology, by contrast, operates in an almost exactly inverse manner. Put crudely, if one begins with a status quo – knowledge or the symbolic – one must look for a break or rupture in the status quo to account for change. Deleuze instead *begins* with change, with becoming, with events. For Deleuze, what is primary in any social formation are its lines of flight, its movements of deterritorialization,

which are *already* movements of resistance. "Far from lying outside the social field or emerging from it," Deleuze writes, "lines of flight constitute its rhizome or cartography."[35] Resistance, in a sense, is built into Deleuze's ontology, and for this reason, the conceptual problem he faces wound up being quite different from Foucault's. If a social field "flees" or "leaks" in every direction, the primary question is how any social formation manages to *capture* these movements, to integrate, to stratify them – and it is precisely "organizations of power" that effect this integration and capture. This explains the statement in Deleuze's 1977 letter with which we began: "If *dispositifs* of power are in some way constitutive [for Foucault], there can only be phenomena of 'resistance' against them . . . For myself, the status of phenomena of resistance is not a problem, since lines of flight are primary determinations."[36] This claim reaches its culmination in the analysis of capitalism found in *Anti-Oedipus*: capitalism is a vast enterprise of deterritorialization and decoding, pushed to an almost schizophrenic limit, which nonetheless reterritorializes and recodes with one hand what it decodes and deterritorializes on the other.

But this leads to a final problem. If resistance is not a conceptual problem in Deleuze, it is because it is, in effect, built into his ontology. But a different problem comes to the fore in Deleuze, which gets at the same issue Foucault was confronting with the problem of resistance, but from an inverted position. It is a problem that remained unaddressed in *Anti-Oedipus*, and would only receive a solution in *A Thousand Plateaus*, and it is precisely the problem of *the organization of power*. "Our problem is as follows," Deleuze said in a 1973 interview, shortly after the publication of *Anti-Oedipus*:

> Given a system [capitalism] that escapes in every direction and that, at the same time, continually prevents, represses, or blocks escape routes by every available means, what can we do so that the escapes may no longer be individual attempts or small communities, but instead truly constitute a revolutionary machine?[37]

In other words, it is our own desire that organizes power and its system of repression, such that we all invest our desire in the very social machine that represses us and defines our interests. But this forces upon Deleuze a manner of posing the problem of resistance in a new way: can desire organize power in such a way that the social machine it constitutes is truly a revolutionary machine? "The real problems," as Guattari says, "are problems of organization."[38]

It is precisely this issue that Deleuze and Guattari address in the "Treatise on Nomadology" in *A Thousand Plateaus* with their concept of the "war-machine." It is, in my opinion, one of the most original and important texts in Deleuze's corpus, and lies at the core of his political philosophy. Why have revolutions gone badly? Because, until now, there has not existed within the revolutionary field a social machine that did not produce an embryonic State apparatus, or a party apparatus, which is the very

institution of repression. Until now, revolutionary parties have constituted themselves as synthesizers of interests, rather than functioning as analyzers of desires. The question of revolution must be pushed to the level of desire: if it is desire that organizes power, is desire capable of organizing a social machine that does not reproduce a State apparatus? It is not enough simply to say that escape, resistance, and deterritorialization are primary in any social system. What is necessary is an organization of power that is capable of organizing and uniting these modes of escape *without reproducing a State apparatus*. This is why, for Deleuze, it is the concept of the war-machine that poses the true problem of revolution: "How can a war machine account for all the escapes that happen in the present system without crushing them, dismantling them, and without reproducing a state apparatus?"[39]

In this sense, the war machine is a social assemblage that is constructed directly on a line of flight: it is itself a movement of decoding, of deterritorialization – which is why it tends to disappear and abolish itself, or be appropriated by the State. Indeed, it seems likely to me that Deleuze and Guattari were attempting to identify the kind of social formation that would correspond to the mode of existence of "activity" and "affirmation," in the Nietzschean sense.[40] If the State is a *reactive* formation, the nomadic war-machine must be seen as an *active* formation, one that follows the movement of a line of flight. It is here that the problem of resistance appears in Deleuze's work at its most acute point: the analysis of the war-machine as a collective organization of power. The true confrontation concerns the relation between Foucault's problem of resistance and Deleuze's problem of capture.

Notes

1. Gilles Deleuze, "Desire and Pleasure," in this volume, pp. 226–7. This text was first published as Gilles Deleuze, "Désir et plaisir," ed. François Ewald, *Magazine Littéraire* 325 (October 1994), 57–65. The translation appeared in *Foucault and His Interlocutors*, ed. Arnold I. Davidson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 183–92.
2. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 531n39.
3. Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Seán Hand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 89.
4. Michel Foucault, "The Lives of Infamous Men," in *The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984, Volume 3: Power*, ed. James D. Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: New Press, 2001), 157–75: 158.
5. Ibid. 158.
6. Ibid. 158.
7. Deleuze, *Foucault*, 89.
8. Ibid. 106.
9. Deleuze, "Desire and Pleasure," in this volume, pp. 227–8.

10. Ibid. 228.
11. Ibid. 229.
12. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), §119, 76.
13. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Random House, 1967), §481, 267.
14. Nietzsche, *Daybreak*, §109, 64–5.
15. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Modern Library, 1968), §36, 237.
16. Nietzsche, *Daybreak*, §119, 74.
17. Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, §387, 208.
18. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: Vintage, 1974), §307, 245–6.
19. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, §116 and §115, 174.
20. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, §36, 237: "Suppose nothing else were 'given' as real except our world of desires and passions, and we could not get down, or up, to any other 'reality' besides the reality of our drives . . . In the end, it is not only permitted to make this experience; the method of conscience demands it."
21. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (New York: Viking Penguin, 1977), 35.
22. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 63. See Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Pierre Klossowski, *Living Currency*, ed. Vernon W. Cisney, Nicolae Morar, and Daniel W. Smith (London: Bloomsbury, 2017).
23. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 29.
24. Gilles Deleuze, "On Capitalism and Desire," in *Desert Islands and Other Texts, 1953–1974*, ed. David Lapoujade, trans. Michael Taormina (New York: Semiotext(e), 2004), 262–3.
25. Ibid. 262.
26. For a reading of Deleuze's relation to Lacan, see Daniel W. Smith, "The Inverse Side of the Structure: Žižek on Deleuze on Lacan," in *Essays on Deleuze* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 312–24.
27. See Slavoj Žižek, *Organs without Bodies: Deleuze and Consequences* (London: Routledge, 2003), who analyzes "Lacan's path from desire to drive" (102).
28. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. James Creed Meredith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), Introduction §3, 15–16: "The faculties of the soul are reducible to three, which do not admit of any further derivation from a common ground: the *faculty of knowledge*, the *feeling of pleasure and displeasure*, and the *faculty of desire*."
29. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, Introduction, §3, 16n1.
30. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, in *Practical Philosophy*, ed. Mary J. McGregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), "Critical Elucidation of the Analytic of Pure Practical Reason," 5:89, 212.
31. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 25.
32. Ibid. 26.

33. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, "Critical Elucidation of the Analytic of Pure Practical Reason," 5:89, 212.
34. Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale, ed. Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 176.
35. Deleuze, "Desire and Pleasure," 187.
36. Ibid. 188–9.
37. Deleuze, *Desert Islands*, 279–80.
38. Ibid. 264.
39. Ibid. 279–80. See also 280: "Today, we're looking for the new mode of unification in which, for example, the schizophrenic discourse, the intoxicated discourse, the perverted discourse, the homosexual discourse, all the marginal discourses can subsist, so that all these escapes and discourses can graft themselves onto a war-machine that won't reproduce a State or Party apparatus."
40. Nietzsche pointed to the problem of the war machine in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: "Where the state *ends* – look there, my brothers! Do you not see it, the rainbow and bridges of the overman?" Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, First Part, § 11, "In the New Idol," in *The Portable Nietzsche*, trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: Viking, 1977), 163.